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Teacher's credentials still secret

By Rafael Alvarez

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Annapolis — A top official in the Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks has a secret past.

Twenty years ago, in the ancient Greek city of Athens, Alexander J. (Jim) Vouzikas found himself in situations "strange and unbelievable."

Often in danger without being aware of it, Mr. Vouzikas had constant knowledge of "diabolical stuff people do that no one does normally," while working in a job that sometimes made him wonder, "What am I doing here?"

What he was doing there was working for the CIA.

"They wanted me because of a special experience I have, which I can't go into. It's nothing that I could describe," said Mr. Vouzikas of his five-year experience with the CIA in Washington and in Greece. "My [former] duties with the CIA are classified."

Repeatedly pressed for details about his assignments during an interview at his Annapolis home, Mr. Vouzikas replied politely but firmly, "I was just an employee."

Today, despite the secrecy surrounding his old job, the 52-year-old Mr. Vouzikas will begin teaching a non-credit Anne Arundel Community College course on "The Intelligence Network of the United States Government." The course will be held at Crofton Junior High School, several miles from the National Security Agency (NSA), another major intelligence-gathering agency.

"Anne Arundel county is a defense-oriented community with NSA, Westinghouse, the Naval Academy and Fort Meade located here," said

Dr. Thomas E. Florestano, president of the community college.

"I expect the course will be very popular, as a lot of our military courses are, which normally attract adults," Dr. Florestano said. "I don't think you'll have people in there trying to select the negative aspects of the CIA."

The \$15 course — two 2½-hour sessions — will be repeated on the college's Arnold campus beginning April 3.

Before Mr. Vouzikas decided to go ahead with the course — an idea that arose when he lectured earlier on intelligence to students taking a continuing education course in diplomacy at the college — he thought it wise to check with his former employer for clearance.

Out of touch for nearly 20 years, he had to consult the white pages for their phone number.

After Mr. Vouzikas called for guidance, the CIA sent him two glossy promotional booklets to help in his instruction.

"We don't have any authority to deny former employees" the right to teach about intelligence, said Dale Peterson, a spokesman for the CIA in Langley, Va., who said former agents are teaching such college courses all over the country.

But, warned Mr. Peterson, "If an [ex-agent] does get into areas that are classified, he does so at his own jeopardy." If word gets out that a former employee is spilling state secrets, the information is turned over to the Justice Department for possible criminal prosecution.

Although Mr. Vouzikas said he will

"have to be very careful" only to use information he's found printed some place — including two spy texts he found at a used bookstore in Annapolis — he feels the time he spent in the CIA will give the course a believability students might not get from reading on their own.

"People have very little knowledge of the interaction between government agencies and what happens to the information they collect after it's gathered," Mr. Vouzikas said. "Even the Department of Agriculture gathers intelligence."

One of the main points he will bring out in the course — which will cover ground from the history of espionage to a comparison of the KGB and the CIA to the reasons why people spy — is the difference between a spy and an intelligence officer.

"A spy is an individual selling information for a variety of motivations, sex, blackmail, money. The man who handles information from the spy is the intelligence officer, the professional people," said Mr. Vouzikas, who left the CIA on a leave of absence in 1961 to finish his undergraduate degree.

When it began hiring again in the mid-to late Sixties, Mr. Vouzikas didn't return because "by then I had a wife and child, and the only jobs they were offering me were in Vietnam." He was then working for the Arundel parks department where he is now assistant to the director.

While it is doubtful that Mr. Katsereles will get an answer to one of the questions that really pricks his curiosity — is the U.S. government using the space shuttle to do any spying? — he remains eager for the course to begin.